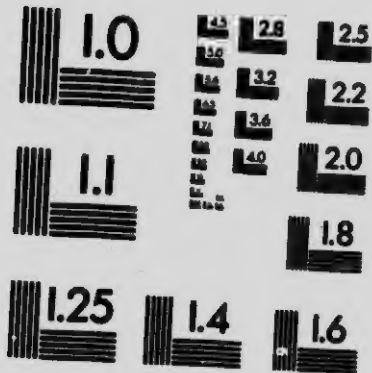


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CANADA AND THE NAVY

SPEECH

DELIVERED BY

Capt. Clive Phillipps-Wolley

AT PUBLIC MEETING, VICTORIA, B.C.

10th March, 1910

At a public meeting under the auspices of the Victoria and Esquimalt Navy League, held in the Victoria Theatre, Victoria, B. C., on March 10th, 1910, to consider Canada's naval aid to the Empire, the following Resolution, moved by Captain Clive Phillipps-Wolley and seconded by Mr. W. H. Langley, was carried unanimously:

"That this meeting heartily endorses the permanent policy of the Government as that best calculated in the long run to afford the greatest measure of aid to the Empire; but urges that an emergency exists at the present moment which necessitates an immediate additional contribution of Dreadnoughts or cash.

"It is further resolved that the entire naval service of Canada should pass automatically under the control of the commander of the Royal Navy on the threat or outbreak of hostilities against Great Britain."

In moving the Resolution, Captain Clive Phillipps-Wolley, President of the League, made the following address:

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,—I will not spend any of the precious

minutes which you have given me in thanking you for coming. You have come because you are loyal to that Empire which your forefathers made, and which you are still making, and for such loyalty Canadians expect no thanks. A Briton's work for Britain is its own proud reward.

I have, as you know, to speak tonight to a definite resolution, and to deal adequately with the points raised therein will tax my powers of condensation to the uttermost, so that though I cannot at our annual meeting altogether avoid stock taking, I am going to deal with that part of my duty as briefly as I can.

Fortunately this is not because I dare not present our balance sheet.

The Navy League in Victoria and Esquimalt is, with the exception of the Toronto Branch, the oldest in Canada, and its numerical strength today is greater than it has ever been before, though it is still pitifully small compared with the work which it has to do.

At the League's foundation lay the idea of aid to Britain's navy, and to that idea it has been loyal ever since

its foundation, but even when I was first made President of it, we had not got beyond the discussion of the question: "Is it Canada's duty to assist in bearing Britain's naval burden," and in that discussion in those days we could easily remember the names of the men and of the public bodies who were upon our side.

Today it is easier to remember the names of those who are opposed to us. I remember that in my first Presidential address in 1907 I set myself to prove to you that it was Canada's duty to aid Britain's navy because upon that, under God, the whole Empire depended, and that upon the maintenance of that Empire depended very largely the Christianity, civilization and peace of the whole world, and (as a fraction of this vast whole) your own individual welfare and prosperity.

There were six great arguments against me: there was one great fact in my favor.

They said that there should be no taxation without representation; that we needed all our money for internal development; that we were safe under the Monroe doctrine; that we had done our whole duty in building the C. P. R.; that we were too poor; and that the French Canadians were solidly opposed to contribution.

The one fact in my favor was that the Heart of Canada is British and beats to the tune of "Home, Sweet Home," and so, Gentlemen, we found an answer to every one of these arguments. Even the last of them has no longer any strength, since a house divided against itself cannot stand, and if Messrs. Marcell, Monk and Bourassa are opposed to contribution, *La Patrie* and *La Presse* are on our side, and I venture to think as much of the spirit of Montcalm as still abides in the Province of Quebec.

In three years we have gained this.

The principle of naval contribution is no longer disputed in eight at any rate of the nine provinces of the Dominion; the duty of bearing the Imperial burden is conceded by almost all, and in our West is not only con-

ceded, but welcomed. For reasons already suggested I am not going into details. You can see for yourselves that the League has grown in popularity; I am glad to say that it has also grown in numbers, but though I will not complain I would remind you that the whole naval league of Britain can be counted in a few thousands, and that it is matched against such leagues as those of Germany, Russia and other European States, and that one of those is over a million strong.

We want more workers, and we want someone to whisper to our King that the League which built the German Navy was founded and led by the German Emperor's brother, and that one of the most gifted women in Canada has suggested that if a certain boy Prince of England honored Canada's Navy League by leading it, that League would very soon be commensurate with the male population of the Dominion. We cannot send our messages direct to the foot of the Throne. They may get there, nevertheless. I, at any rate, have "passed." Gentlemen of the Press, "on the ball," if you please.

If it were necessary I could show you, Gentlemen, that small as this your League is, it has in the last year made itself seriously felt many thousand miles from Victoria, and I could prove this by quotation from leading English dailies, but I have no time tonight to read records. You can join the League and read them for yourselves, if you like.

Now to my resolution.

Throughout Britain the duty of Colonial contribution has been recognized, with the result that three of the great Dominions have contributed or promised to contribute.

New Zealand, the least of them, with a population all told of about 600,000, has promised a Dreadnought, which will cost her about \$11,000,000.

Australia, with about 6,000,000 people, has undertaken to provide a local navy which will cost her about \$12,000,000.

Canada, the greatest of the Dominions and the nearest home, with a population of about 2,000,000, is still talking of creating a local navy not built upon the lines suggested by the Admiralty, and not at the call of the King, to cost her about \$10,000,000.

Let me boil that down for you a little.

It means that Canadians are thinking of giving less than 10 cents per man as compared with the dollar per man of the New Zealanders. It means that New Zealand has pledged herself to a direct gift; that Australia has contributed a local fleet in the form deemed most desirable by the Admiralty, whilst Canada has promised two small local navies not on the Admiralty lines, which may be of some service as training ships or commerce destroyers, but which are not serviceable as fleet units and have no ships in them fit for Britain's fighting line, and which will not be ready for any conceivable emergency.

At first blush this does not look very creditable or very hopeful, but as a permanent policy the Canadian policy of building local navies has much in its favor, and is perhaps as set forth in our resolution, the policy best calculated to serve Britain in the long run.

A direct contribution in cash might be the most practically useful to Britain in the present and would no doubt be the cheapest to Canada, but it would inevitably be distasteful to our people; it might weaken the ties which bind us, instead of strengthening; and would do nothing to cultivate a naval spirit amongst us.

The tone of some of the French papers which have come over to our side suggest to me a danger. "Let us make a direct contribution," they say, "and be done with it." That is just what we want to avoid.

When Canada begins to take an interest in Naval matters we never want her "to have done with it," and therefore we support the permanent policy of the Government because the building of local navies will create a naval

spirit amongst our people; will create an interest in their own navy which men only feel in the things which they themselves have made; will arouse a generous rivalry between the Dominions which must inure to Britain's benefit; and will especially create shipyards (the capacity for producing ships) which are worth more to Britain than many Dreadnoughts.

On these grounds we endorse the permanent policy of the Government.

But, Gentlemen, there was more in that resolution of March, 1909, the resolution of both our great parties in the State, than is contained in the permanent policy which I ask you to endorse.

In that resolution a loop hole was wilfully left for the giving of an abnormal contribution to the Mother country in case of emergency. This is why our resolution pleads for an additional contribution in Dreadnoughts or cash.

It is for us to show that an emergency exists.

Upon this point there is great difference of opinion, and in our desire to allow for this we do not wish to allege, though many better informed people do, that there is any immediate danger of war with Germany, but it must be conceded that the contest for supremacy which is so terribly likely to end in a real war, has already commenced.

It is the war of the work shops, and unless Britain is united it seems almost impossible that the people of the narrow seas can in the long run maintain their supremacy against the greater man-power and greater potential wealth of Germany.

England and Her Children, united under one head, would be invincible, and a guarantee of the world's peace: England alone or Britain disunited might induce a general catastrophe.

You ask me why I fear danger from Germany. I do not fear danger from Germany; I fear the force of circumstances. Germany is today the greatest power in Europe; Germany today is the richest power in Europe; Ger-

many today has incomparably the finest army in Europe, and if she ever adds to the mastery of the land the supremacy of the sea it will be for her to take that world dominion which every military nation has aspired to from the time of Caesar to the time of Napoleon.

But you tell me the Germans are a good people and would do none of these things. I admit that they are a good people, a great people, a people from whom we sprang, and so dangerously like ourselves that we may expect them to do what we did. We wanted colonies, and we took them. They want colonies worse than anything else in the world, and we or our American cousins have them. There is a great dearth of empty white man's land in the world, and the white men of the greatest military power in the world are multiplying very rapidly.

Again, we used to claim that we were the greatest traders in the world. It is almost doubtful if England is so any longer. Germany is, at any rate, a dangerous rival, and Germany wants our trade as Germany wants our colonies. But you say, "Have you not heard what the German ambassador and the German Emperor have recently said about peace?" Yes, I have, and I remember that a diplomatist is "a good man sent abroad to lie for his country's good," and that Frederick the Great himself laid it down as an axiom that it is a ruler's duty to sacrifice engagements which are hurtful to the people. I dread the logical result of Bismarck's moral laws for a nation almost as much as I do the force of circumstances. Bismarck said that the only healthy basis of a great state is national selfishness and not romantic idealism. In obedience to this law Bismarck made Prussia the greatest power in Germany by doubling his army; he made Germany a commercial rival to Britain by wresting Kiel from Denmark; he made Germany the greatest power in Europe by crushing France, and if Germany were today secretly preparing to crush England she would be acting exactly

in accord with the best interest of that national selfishness preached by Bismarck; in accord with that law of secrecy in war and politics laid down by the Emperor Frederick; and any war which she waged would be justified according to him so long as it brought prestige to her people. So much for German morals of this question.

Now, Gentlemen, if you ask me what evidence I adduce of the existence of this emergency I tell you that the best evidence is (1) Germany's necessity; (2) Germany's opportunity; (3) Germany's national creed as suggested by the quotations I have made; (4) the German Emperor's oft quoted statement that the trident must be in Germany's mailed fist; (5) the repeated utterances to the same effect of Germany's leading men; (6) the German Navy League one million strong; (7) the utterances of leaders of all parties in England before the elections, McKenna, Balfour, Blatchford, Asquith, Grey, Lord Cromer, Lord Curzon, Lord Roberts, Lord Charles Beresford, The Times, the Post, the Spectator, the Clarion, indeed the utterances of almost every great voice in England, whether of Liberal or Conservative or Socialist, whether soldier, sailor or journalist; (8) the creation of Germany's great fleet upon borrowed money for service upon waters within easy reach of her shores, as shown by the want of coal carrying capacity in these ships; and (9) by the concentration of Britain's navy in Her home waters.

Gentlemen, to any fair minded man more evidence than this seems to me unnecessary, although if time permitted it would be easily available.

As to the necessity of meeting an abnormal emergency by a present abnormal gift of ships or cash I do not propose to speak. It is a subject peculiarly close to all our hearts, and to none more so than to those of our brothers at Vancouver, and for this reason I propose to leave this portion of my subject to our whole-hearted ally from Vancouver, Mr. Bell-Irving.

Two points only I will suggest in this connection which he may elaborate. The first is that if we want to stop this expensive contest for supremacy, nothing is more likely to do it than the sight of our sister nations rallying round the common standard; and my second point is that if we are to give ships, we could not do better than supply those two first class battleships which are needed to make our two baby navies serviceable units on the lines laid down by the Admiralty.

And now I come to my last clause, and to me the most important one of all, "That the entire Naval Service of Canada shall become automatically a part of the British Navy, under one supreme control at the threat or outbreak of hostilities."

Some people plead against the creation of local navies as tending toward separation. I see the possible danger, but having known for twenty years something of the Heart of Canada, I do not believe in it. I hear that some people would rather set up a little business of their own rather than be partners in the Biggest Business on earth, and I marvel at the possibilities of human folly.

But, gentlemen, if it ever became a fact that this Navy of Canada was not at war when England was at war, that the sea captains of the Empire had not unquestioned control in war time of the whole of the Empire's fleet, that would be Separation, and separation of any limb from the Heart means death to the limb and the gravest danger to the whole body.

New Zealand raises no question of divided control. She gives all without conditions. Australia retains home rule of her own contribution in time of peace, but asserts plainly that in time of war her navy is 'he King's, God Bless Him, and yet Canada, we are told, Canada, the premier Dominion, the nearest to the Heart, seems to suggest separation: that in time of Britain's need she will only go to war if she wants to.

Upon the third clause in our reso-

lution the whole question of Canadian naval aid to the Mother Country depends.

It reads that the entire naval service of Canada should pass automatically (or as a matter of course), under the control of the Commander of the Royal (perhaps Imperial would be the better word) Navy on the threat or outbreak of hostilities against Britain.

Upon this point the Premier of Canada has delivered himself of three utterances:

1. His first was on the debate on the address. He then said: "Need I say to my Honourable friend (Mr. Monk) that whether we have such a navy or not, we do not lose our right to self-government; that if we do have a navy that navy will go to no war unless the Parliament of Canada chooses to send it there."

2. His second utterance, recorded in Hansard, January 12th of this year, reads: "As I have already stated, in case of emergency the Governor in Council may exercise the power of calling out the naval force to be placed at the disposal of His Majesty, the only action being that Parliament is to be immediately summoned"; and in answer to a question by Mr. Sproule, Sir Wilfrid defined war as: "War everywhere. When Britain is at war, Canada is at war; there is no distinction. If Great Britain, to which we are subject, is at war with any other nation, Canada becomes liable to invasion, and so Canada is at war."

3. His third utterance was on February 3rd, and it was to this effect, that he had, he feared, shocked the minds and souls of his friends in Quebec by stating "that when England is at war we are at war."

He explained that that was merely a statement of a principle of international law: that when a nation is at war all her possessions are liable to attack, but that "it is for the Parliament of Canada which created this navy to say when and where it shall go to war."

Supreme Command

Now, gentlemen, I say to you, read these different speeches in Hansard for yourselves and make your own comments. I am pledged as President of a non-partisan league to refrain from doing so, but it is my duty to comment upon facts, and I say most emphatically that unless the Canadian Navy is bound to go to war when the Mother Country goes to war, as an integral part of Britain's navy, under the supreme command of the Head of that Navy, without waiting upon the will of party politicians, it is worthless to Britain. It is worse than that. It is an added danger to Britain, for a commander must count upon whom he can rely before entering upon a war, and any miscalculation may be fatal.

You want a Navy to protect your trade in distant seas. Can your young fleets at Victoria and Halifax do that? That is the work of a wide-spread Imperial Navy.

You want when a war breaks out, the combined force of Britain seek out and crush your enemy. Can separate and irresponsible fleets do that?

You want to be an integral portion of the world's greatest navy, sharing all its dangers and all its glories, and not to be the smallest naval baby in the world.

Gentlemen, I quote from Kipling and the Bible: "Canada is a daughter in her mother's house and mistress in her own, but she must be a daughter after the manner of Ruth, whose oath was: 'Thy people shall be my people,

Thy God my God, and where thou goest (to war) I go.'"

Two more words and I have done.

Sir William White, Britain's naval constructor, writes that party politics should be entirely excluded from naval matters: that in the discussion of questions affecting naval supremacy there should be only one party. That is also your Premier's view, and I hope that I have shown it to be mine by asking Messrs. Hawthornthwaite and Brewster to speak here tonight, and by my general conduct of this Navy League's campaign.

My last word is this. In the West we have a law which all learn to obey. It is, "If you want anything done do it yourself." I commend that law to the West. If your politicians for various reasons cannot give the two warships you want out of the public money, there is no law to prevent your giving them. Go down into your own pockets and put up the price of them. We have talked enough, and I at least am tired. If you will do this you may call on me for the first thousand.

In the fulness of time we shall probably see Britain represented by one House for the consideration of all Imperial matters; a Britain composed of sister nations, each of which will have home rule in purely local matters, but then, as now, we must have one God, one Empire, one Flag, and one, and only one, Fleet, under the supreme control of Britain's sea captain for the time being.

